

Results of the International meeting of Pro Rail organisations

Date 17th of March 2008

Time 14:00 – 18:30 hours

Place UIC Highspeed Congress at Amsterdam RAI Convention Centre

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Participants See separate list on page 5

1. Opening and short introduction of European organisations

Corina de Jongh (Railforum) welcomes all to this special day in Amsterdam. To our regret, Ton Kaper (chairman of Railforum) is unable to be here today but wishes this to be a fruitful meeting. All organisations present give a short report of their organisations.

Holland:

Railforum is an independent organisation that unifies a broad range of companies in the railway sector, and has also formed alliances with several academies and consumer platforms. Our activities consist of organising conferences / workshops / seminars, projects, excursions, the Jonge Veranderaars, data store www.railpedia.nl, and communication with our members. In this way we hope to play a role in having rail transport stay prominently on everyone's agenda as a viable option for transport. ([see presentation 1](#))

Romania:

The Romanian Railway Industry Association has the function of bringing colleagues together, but also functions as a “business club” for railway companies, consisting of suppliers, infrastructure and operators. Their goals consist of granting access to neighbouring countries for their use of the Euro-Asian Railways, and to stimulate the investments in roads and railways. Liberalisation plays an important role in this, but a lot can also be learned from Allianz Pro Schiene. ([see presentation 2](#))

Croatia:

The Croatian Pro-Rail Alliance (Gewerkschaft der Eisenbahner Kroatiens) is momentarily primarily focussed on meeting requirements so that it can be ready to join the EU. ([see presentation 3](#))

Sweden:

Järnvägsforum has existed for 6 years and the function for which it was originally setup has been fulfilled. This next year it will think about it's necessity to continue and how this will be done. At this moment a lobby may be a viable option, although its function as a “think tank” or knowledge database might also be of importance. Also, expanding to a forum for intermodal transport may be of use. ([see presentation 4](#))

Germany:

Allianz Pro Schiene is still looking to create a European platform that co-exists with the other forums that represent a wide range of parties including unions (unlike Railforum) and consumer

groups (unlike Jarvangsforum). Their mission remains to increase the quality of life through mobility while preserving the environment and safety. ([See presentation 5](#))

Hungary:

The MTA SZTAKI primarily focuses on research and has just finished a research on environmentally unfriendly subsidies, how trucks destroy roads, how to reduce tax evasion and on kilometre fees. ([see presentation 6](#))

England

The Railway forum in the UK is momentarily focussed on electrification, sustainability, and on High speed networks. It offers active support for relevant ideas. ([see presentation 7](#))

2. Aspects of closer cooperation

There is a consensus that platforms originate when the market is privatised and companies struggle to survive. However, the form in which these platforms are created differs. Some represent unions, others represent the companies, few represent the consumers / passengers. Often, platforms are formed to influence governmental decisions (ex. Romania and liberalisation).

One thing that binds us is the fact that environmental issues are gaining importance and energy plays an important role in this discussion. With this we have a new opportunity to position trains as being a sustainable form of transport. Let's make the society and economy aware of this!

Politicians often assume that roads benefit the consumers more than railways. Roads cost less in the beginning, and consumer benefits are more quickly visible. This is however a misconception, seeing as in its calculation, road damage costs (for example) are not taken into consideration. Romania, Croatia and Hungary all agree that the road lobby is very much stronger than the railway lobby (In Romania it's 16.000 companies for road and 16 companies for train). This has to change. To help change this misconception, Romania and Hungary are now working together for special high speed lines. We all agree that we need to work together on concrete projects to help increase the rail lobby, another umbrella organisation is not necessary.

3. Railpedia

Railpedia is an on-line medium that is dependant on the contribution of others. It allows information to be stored (encyclopaedia), discussions to take place, and is a place where people can work together on one document or article. It carries the same philosophy as the Wikipedia. Recently, Railpedia has been renewed to make it easier for people to contribute.

The question raised was if there was sentiment for a European / International Railpedia (and not just a Dutch one). Even though all organisations acted positively on this aspect, they were not sure if their members would be as keen on contributing to it. This is a very important part of Railpedia. Without the contribution of its members, it cannot exist. In the next couple of months Railforum will evaluate the use of Railpedia by their members, if this proves successful, further steps will be taken in professionally setting up a European / International Railpedia. If this happens, certain questions will need consensus from all parties, such as:

- Will we actively put effort into translation of all articles, and in which languages?
- Who will be able to view and who will be able to publish / comment?
- How will hosting costs be covered?
- Which security issues need to be addressed?

For the time being, everyone is free to contribute to the existing Dutch Railpedia. English publications / articles and or definitions are welcome. If you would like for something to be placed on Railpedia, you can send it to Railforum and they will do it for you, or you can try your-self!

(for background information, [see presentation 8](#))

4. The brochure for promoting 25 successful EU projects

Matthias Pippert (Allianz Pro Schiene) suggests that we need a brochure with 25 successful EU projects. This can help promote regional passenger rail transport. Its aim is to influence public opinion and to show politicians that there are many successful EU projects. This might help to get EU funds.

All countries showed appreciation for this project. Romania also suggested to include economic effects. England suggested to first restore the image of the railway by focussing on the projects that weren't as successful. Sweden added that the brochure could be used to show that local problems are the same in other EU countries. Hungary pointed out that categorizing this brochure into not successful (ex. regional lines?) and more successful (ex. sub regional lines?) projects could have benefits.

Concept 1 of the brochure will only focus on the benefits / successful EU projects. There is a consensus that the brochure should not include too much “scientific stuff” but mainly “common thoughts” and maybe some economic conditions.

(for background information, [see presentation 9](#))

5. Campaign “From Road to Rail”

András Lukács would like to explore the option for having the Pro Rail organisations send a petition to the EU requesting road users to pay for the use of roads.

This option was received with enthusiasm but some were also reluctant in believing that a petition like this would result in all countries having to pay for the use of roads. Also, a comment was made that railways still cause damage to the environment. If we do not make advances road traffic may in a couple years be less damaging to the environment than rail transport. In addition, busses generally receive greater priority when it comes to investment costs. The last critical comment was that a petition like this would be hard to realize because of the existing bureaucracy in politics.

A positive note was also made, namely that it is a fact that when busses are replaced by rails, the number of travellers double, and spatial structure around stations and other intersections increase. Allianz Pro Schiene has brought out a brochure specifying 10 reasons to choose for rail, and now supports the idea to disapprove of the free use of roads.

(for background information, [see presentation 10](#))

6. The invasion of Mega-Trucks

Matthias Pippert gives us some facts about Mega-Trucks such as the fact that Mega-Trucks cause a 30-50% reduction in Rail Transport. Also he tells us about their protest against Mega-Trucks in Germany which has proven to be successful. Now there is a study from the EU concerning these Mega-Trucks, and the results will be published in July 2008. The end of March Allianz Pro Schiene will launch the internet site www.mega-trucks.eu and hopes that other parties will join.

There is a general consensus that we agree to be against the use of Mega-Trucks and that we would like to form a lobby against the presence of these. Matthias Pippert will keep us updated on the further advances surrounding this topic.

(for background information, [see presentation 11](#))

7. End of session

The session ends with a positive note that it has been nice to see each-other again. Romania has offered to invite us to their country for the meeting next year.

The day ends with a “Mega” dinner party at the Passenger Terminal in Amsterdam.

Participants International Meeting Pro Rail Organisations March 17th 2008

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